

HANDS of PEACE

Peace is Possible!



1000 Elm Street, Glenview, IL 60025

www.handsofpeace.org

Questions? Call 224-406-5045

SAVE THE DATE for the HOP GALA: Saturday, April 28th, 2012!!

2012 SUMMER PROGRAM DATES: Monday, July 2 – Thursday, July 19

(We will be accepting US participant applications from December 1 – March 1,
and host family applications from December 1 – April 15! All applications are available online.)

The first Hands of Peace sponsored trip to Israel/

Palestine was a resounding success. Our group of 36 travelers experienced a “dual narrative” tour by MEJDI (Middle East Justice and Development Initiatives), a unique tour operator co-owned by a Palestinian peace activist and a Jewish peace activist. We had two outstanding guides—a Jewish-Israeli and a Palestinian (HOP facilitator Husam Jubran)—for the entire ten days. Both were remarkable in their grasp of history, culture, and current politics, and shared fascinating stories and varying perspectives along the way. We stayed in Jerusalem and Haifa, taking day trips to visit Bethlehem, Hebron, Sderot, Masada, Nazareth, the Dead Sea and the Galilee, among other places. We also had delightful meetings with HOP alumni in Jerusalem, with alumni and family members in Haifa, and a surprise visit from two alumni in Sderot. The challenging but rewarding trip truly broadened our understanding of the region, gave us insight into the heartaches and complexities of the conflict, and deepened our resolve that peace is possible. There might be another HOP trip in 2012 or 2013—we’ll keep you posted!



~Submitted by HOP Trip Coordinator Laura Bernstein

News from the Alumni Clubs...

Both the US and the Middle East Alumni Clubs have been very busy! The US Alumni Club has held regular monthly meetings, and have discussed current events, fundraising ideas for HOP, the possibility of putting “peace poles” at various locations throughout the Chicago area, and have been able to skype with some of the Middle Eastern Hands during their meetings – love that technology! The US AC also decided to elect the following officers this year: President Julie Sarne, Vice-President Mikey Shihadeh, Secretaries Casey Chiappetta and Kyle Klapacz, Publicity Coordinators Raquel Boton and Jessica Hoffen, Events Coordinators Sydni Schwartz and Vicki Powers, and GBS Liaison Noah Warshawsky.



The Middle East Alumni Club has also been meeting, and recently held a two-day seminar in Haifa that aimed to teach HOP participants about some of the many cultures of the region. The seminar included visits to the Bahai Gardens, the Druze area, an Isfya village, and also a Bedouin tent to learn about the Bedouin culture. There were several dialogue sessions scheduled, and some of the older alumni conducted activities with the younger alumni – all in all, an eye-opening experience for everyone!

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE: www.handsofpeace.org (no more hyphens necessary!)

December 2011

From HOP Board Chair Oscar Marquis:

I am very honored to be stepping into the role of Board Chair for 2012 and only hope I can be as effective as past Chair Laura Bernstein. I wish to thank her on behalf of the Board for her outstanding leadership. We face many challenges as we plan the 2012 Summer Program, Alumni Club activities, as well as begin the first steps in expanding the program to other locations in the US. We also welcome several new Board members: Ellen Ewing, Kathryn Gilbertson, and Emman Randazzo, and say farewell and "THANKS" to Joanna Sullivan. I look forward to a challenging and successful year and would be happy to hear any of your suggestions or comments. Thanks for your support.



Welcome to our new Jewish Israeli Regional Coordinator Noam Laor!

Noam lives in Tel Aviv, has a degree in International Relations, and has worked for several non-profit organizations coordinating youth programs. Noam believes "It is important and meaningful for



me to take part in projects that promote dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, especially when it comes to youth. Hands of Peace gives me hope that one day we will all live side by side in

peace, and I am excited to be involved in such an amazing organization!"

From HOP Founder Gretchen Grad:

I am extremely grateful that the Board of Directors has approved my request to take a 5-month sabbatical from my duties with HOP. After almost 10 years of very intense work, I am looking forward to a brief respite from this rewarding and challenging endeavor. I intend to use the time to organize my ever-growing piles around the house, practice more yoga and explore some lesser-known museums around Chicago. It is a true joy to know we now have deep leadership to keep the work of HOP going during my absence. I plan on returning in April with a renewed sense of energy and focus on how I can best help HOP continue for the next 10 years!



Want to get involved with HOP? Contact Volunteer Coordinator Gail Tatsuda at 847-707-3717 or gtatsuda@handsofpeace.org.

"Weathering" the Summer of 2011 in HOP Spirit, by Program Director Ashley Bates

Wow, what a summer! As a group and as individuals, the 2011 Hands went through a powerful process of examining themselves, their identities, and their connection to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They reacted with high-spirited humor to a summer full of scorching heat, storms that left many families without electricity for days, and even a flood at Glenview Community Church! The HOP community forged ahead together... families kept lots of water and flashlights on hand, XLs moved Handshake Games inside, and we held dialogue sessions and took the HOP peace photo at a generous host family's (dry!) home.

Hands of Peace also made some significant changes to this year's program. We increased the number of Middle East XLs ("eXtraordinary Leaders") from 3 to 6, and the XLs as a group set a wonderful example throughout the program by proactively reaching out to participants from *all* delegations. We also introduced a wildly successful film-making activity where small groups of participants wrote and produced short films about peace. Their videos are full of yearning, and are quite personal and intense, and you can view them through our website. We are so proud of all our courageous Hands, and so grateful to all of you who support their peace-building efforts through **ALL** kinds of weather!



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www.handsofpeace.org

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